

2) **Granting of Scheduled Tribe Status to Karen Communities**

In this connection it is stated that the President and the Joint Secretary, Karen Youth Organization, Webi- village, Mayabunder Tehsil had earlier submitted a Memorandum dated 18.1.2003 to the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India during his visit to A&N Islands in Jan, 2003 demanding inclusion of the Karen community in the list of Scheduled Tribes of the A&N Islands.

The Deputy Director, Govt. of India, Ministry of Tribal Affairs vide his letter No.12016/35/2001-TA (RAL) dated 6<sup>th</sup> February 2003 forwarded a copy of the above said Memorandum seeking the comments of the Administration on the demand of the Karen Youth Organization. A report in the matter was furnished to the Govt. of India, Ministry of Tribal Affairs vide the Administration's letter No.1-554/2000-TW/569 dated 1<sup>st</sup> April 2003. The relevant portion of the letter is quoted below:-

"That the Karens were far more developed than even the Nicobarese, let alone the other five Primitive Tribes and the Karens already are getting preference in recruitment to Group-C and D posts under the Administration alongwith the other locals. So classifying them as a ST in respect of this UT would be detrimental to the interests of the Scheduled Tribes of this UT. Therefore the Administration did not recommend classification of Karens as ST earlier. The same view is still held by the Administration so far as according ST status to the Karens is concerned, as the aboriginal tribes of this UT are much backward when compared to the Karens. Moreover, the Karens are not original inhabitants of this UT unlike the six STs namely - Great Andamanese, Onges, Jarawas, Sentinelese, Nicobarese and Shompens. The Karens were brought to this UT by the British colonial Administration to work as labourers in the forest in 1925-26 and subsequently settled.

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Govt. of India vide his D.O letter No.12016/35/2001-TA(RL) dated 13/8/2003, of the then Ministry for Tribal Affairs has not considered the demand favourably.

However, the Karens have opted for Other Backward Class status and the OBC Commission of A & N Islands have since recommended for declaring them as OBC alongwith a few other communities in respect of A&N Islands. The report is being examined by the Administration.

3) **Granting of Scheduled Caste Status to the large number of Telugu, Tamil, East Bengal Refugees**

There are no SCs notified in relation to the A&N Islands. The Telugu and Tamils, who are stated to belong to SC category in the mainland, have migrated from mainland and settled in these islands. As per the policy laid down, the Govt. of India with regard to migrant SC/ST Community, if a person migrates from one State to another State he / she can claim to belong to a caste / tribe / community only in relation to State which he/she originally